

San Diego, Tuesday, September 22, 1970
The Walls Came Tumbling Down
Chinatown - Now a Memory
by Rosemary ENG

The Sun, Nov. 23, 1935
The Patient Chinese - They Pioneered in S. D.
Ah Quin Family
San Diego's great period of expansion in & after
1881 saw the arrival of the Ah Quin family
& hundreds of other Chinese.

They worked, & hard, they ~~but~~ helped build
the Santa Fe Railroad lines, Sweetwater Daring,
Coronado Beach, found employment in brick
yards & extended the fishing & farm industries

Sun - 2/14/34 The Why of the Wen
Tam Quin

Books

- 1) The Journal of San Diego History
San Diego's Chinese Mission P. 8-21
By Elizabeth C. MacPhail

P.9

By 1881 there were about 150 Chinese living in San Diego. In that year a great many began arriving from the north to work on the California Southern Railroad then being built from National City. One of those who arrived was Ah Quin who supervised large groups of Chinese laborers on the railroad. In November of 1881 he married Miss Ah Sue of San Francisco, and his large family would be one of the first Chinese families in San Diego. He later became a wealthy restaurant owner and businessman & was known as the "Mayor of Chinatown" until his death in 1914.

P.11 Picture of Ah Quin's family (1899)

Master's Thesis Judith Liu San Diego SU 1977
Celestials in the Golden Mountain
The Chinese in One Calif.
City, San Diego, 1870-1900

P.41-42 In 1880, eight of the 10 married females can be clearly matched with their husbands. Of these eight, only three had children. This number of families appears to dispute Don Stewart,

a man born & raised in San Diego during the late 1800s who wrote in Frontier Port, "There was just one Chinese family here in 1882 - the Ah Quin family, who operated a general merchandise store at Fifth & I (now Island) Streets." This discrepancy may be due in part to the fact that one family did not reside in the city, only one other San Diego family operated a store, & all other families were engaged in fishing. Furthermore, these families were probably less visible than the Ah Quin family which Stewart stated "... was the first Chinese family locally to cut their hair short & become Americanized." Although Ah Quin is reported to have arrived in San Diego in 1879, the 1880 Manuscript Schedules do not enumerate him.

Chinese in San Diego, 14-20

P. 16 Frontier Port A Chapter in San Diego's History
By Don M. Stewart 1965

There was just one Chinese family here in 1882 - the Ah Quin family, who operated a general merchandise store at Fifth & I Streets. The store was patronized mostly by Chinese, but they carried American goods also. The Ah Quin family was the first Chinese family locally to have their hair cut short & become Americanized. They spoke good English.

San Diego "A Portrait of a Spectacular City
It's Treasures, Traditions & Promises
Syd Love 'P.33

The ice was broken, & closets & sinks started to be installed, old hopper water closets & wooden smelling sinks were being removed in large numbers. Cesspools under kitchen floors were being filled with earth.

Al Quin was a living example of good citizenship, thrift, & integrity, & did not indulge in the accepted traffic of his community. He boked on the loveliness of the world & aided in correcting it's imperfections.

Old leantoo were ripped down by my men & general

(P.16) About 1890 a fine-looking, intelligent Chinese named Tom Kay, who had a main store in Chinatown, took over the leadership & from then on affairs improved remarkably for his following. Tom Kay dispensed with the queue & Chinese attire. He visited with city & county officials & merchants frequently, & used excellent English.

Walter Bellon Manuscript S.D. Historical Society

A few orientals working uptown in laundries, restaurants & other places of business were first to break the ice, and appeared friendly. Ah Quin, known as the mayor of Chinatown, became very friendly. Tom Kay, Tom Huck & others. I was invited into their living quarters, into their gambling halls, but I only accepted on two occasions. I watched them draw their lottery for the sale of tickets were large. But at no time did they ask me to play. Their habits were never questioned by the health department, it did not concern me, in fact it was not of my official business.

During the days when hoodlum & thugs glared a cautious eye as I entered their shelters, Ah Quin was considered the Mayor of Chinatown. He extended a friendly hand one day, & said he was going to comply with the health notices, & asked me to tell him what was necessary.

Austin, De Graff

Supervisor of the 4th District, interviewed at the Civic Center on April 4, 1960 by Edgar F. Hastings for the, San Diego Historical Society
P. 34

Chinatown

We never went there, although we had some very fine friends there, the Quinn family. Ah Quinn was a vegetable & produce dealer, who was also a private banker to farmers here & there. Banks in those days never made crop loans or things of that sort. It was either a mortgage on your ranch or else. There were some very fine Chinese people. Ah Quinn used to loan money to these Chinese vegetable men, and to white. He was the private banker to farmers here & there. Banks in those days never made crop loans or things of that sort. It was either a mortgage on your ranch or else. There were some very fine Chinese people. Ah Quinn used to loan money to these Chinese people. Ah Quinn vegetable men, and to white. He was the private banker for a good many white ranch operators in the country. He'd make crop loans, he'd stake you to the crop you know. He was a pioneer in the crop loan banking business. Simon Leir was another one, the wholesaler who broke up his partnership with Klauber in Temecula & moved to town & operated a big wholesale produce & supply place. Always dry produce

Halbritter, William G.
Interview by Edgar Hastings, Oct. 9, 1957

P. 9

I have seen the Chinese junks. I remember two of them. They were peculiar looking things. The junks that I remember were not tied up at Roseville. There were two tied up right back of Chinatown, down on the Bay. I wouldn't know if the old timers (Chinese) are still living by, golly, I wouldn't that. Ah Quin was the main guy down in Chinatown in those days. I tell you, do you know this fellow Rife that was chauffeur for Bridges? Well, he married one of the Ah Quin daughters. Ah Quin paid him \$10,000 to marry one of his daughters & he married her. He was white. When he made that offer, my Lord, he had dozens of fellows go down to his place, and out of all the boys that went down there he chose this fellow that drove for Bridges. Ah Quin was a Chinese merchant that ran a store on the corner of 3rd & J streets. It was on the Southeast corner of J street. This fellow Rife, who married Ah Quin's daughter, invented the microscope. He was a genius at it or something like that, & some of the universities took it right off his hands. He also invented field glasses. Somebody made the lens for him, took the old lens out, & put in the new one for him. This Rife had wonderful binoculars. He was working for Bridges when he invented these things,

and then when Bridges died, he left five or thousand
dollars.

P.P.

I have seen the Chinese people
them, they were located in the
vicinity that I remember to see
there were two tied up in the
down on the Bay. I wanted to see
one still, lying off the ship, I was
was the main guy down in the
tell you, do you know what I
Greatest of Bridges, I will be
Chinese people, the Chinese
one of the daughter of the
he was close off, and I had
go down to the place, and saw
down there in the place, and
the Chin was in the place, and
on the corner of 5th and 1st
corner of 1st street, the place
named Mr. Chin's daughter, married
was a picture of it, or something
The minister took it right off
married field place, and I was
for time, took me old time
one for him. The life was
was working for Bridges, the

1915

July 4 - Mabel Ah Quin 2nd in race, 5 dash passenger buick car

1933

Nov. 14 Ah Chuey Quin (wife) & daughter-in law
alien land case Judge Charles C. Haines

1935

Feb. 16th Tom Quin owner of Nanking cafe

Mayor of China town arrested for gambling

17 - Felony charges of criminal conspiracy against
Quin & 36 Chinese Judge Philip Smith

136
Minnie Quin
died

1937

Tom Quin 50 died heart ailment

1972

Feb 13

1848 - born

National City to San Bernardino

1879 - "

1880 - came to San Diego from Santa Barbara

1881

Jan - Ah Quin's new store 5th St between I & J

Nov. - 29 Ah Quin gets married in few days

Dec. 14 - return home with new bride

17 - receive Chinese & Japanese goods for holiday

1882

April 25 - inebriated squaw broke store window

26 - squaw had to pay \$10 fine & confine in jail 10 days

June 1 - another shipment of goods

27 - display of firecrackers & firework for July 4th

Oct. 15 - pleasure trip to San Bernardino

Dec. 14 - move stock next Monday to building next to M.S. Roots' jewelry store.

19 - move store

1883

July - Fireworks Ann Quin born

1884

July. new telephone at store

Aug. 24 - returned from S.F. to get laborers for Calif. Southern.
hard to get them for only \$1.00 a day.

28 - expects 80 Chinese to arrive by steamer

29 - only 26 Chinamen came by the Orizaba

1885

Jan 15 - George Quin born - first male Chinese child

May 26 - shipped carload of rice to front for hungry celestials

June 2. same thing

brought 500 Chinese laborers stir among pop. of 2,300
contract labor supervisor, interpreter &
foreman for Santa Fe Railway

1886

June 5 - Ah Quin vs. Ellen March - Judge McNealy presiding
order made appointing guardian

Aug - 7 Ah Quin didn't want to sell property to Parker for
\$8,300.

- 8 - suit brought to Ah Quin to make deed to property

1887

Feb. 25 - Parker vs. Quin before Judge Gibson. Messrs. Titus, &
Henderson for plaintiff, Messrs. Hunsaker & Conklin for defendant.

March 1 - Verdict for plaintiff, it will be appealed.

10 - suit compel Ah Quin to pay \$1000 to Parker. Parker
must give Quin \$7,500 which \$2,480.60 left to
Clerk of court to pay costs & discharge mortgage.

1889

Oct. 23 Bus. 3rd & I - accusation of keeping a slave girl.

1891

July 1 - made copy of Pierre de P. Rickett's work on assaying
into Chinese

Aug. - wedding of Wong Sing Yuen & Won Hay Ah Quin's adopted
daughter

1892

April 20 - 10th girl oldest girl - 13 musical organ

Mrs. Quin 35 2nd boy - 10 violinist

6 boys 4 girls.

income - owns store

1909 met
Police Chief Keno Wilson

leases property

vegetable gardens in county

contractor for labor

1914 - Feb 8 Ah Quin died 66 yrs. old.

Knocked down 3rd & H by Charles Mundell
one boy freshman in University of Southern Calif.

Dr. Thompson of health dept did surgery

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Look up

Aug. 7, 1886 pg. 3 col. 2 (Parker)

Feb. 10, 1887 5:4 (Parker)

Feb. 25, 1887 3:3 (Parker)

Chinese in San Diego (1891) Mining

April 11, 1899 ?

Oct. 23, 1889 1:7 (servant) Look at SUN.

George Ah Quin Jan 15, 1885, Oct. 12, 1930

Mamie Quin Oct. 7, 1886, Oct. 8, 1957

Franklin Quin Feb. 23, 1893, March 4, 1960

August 15, 1915 Chinese in ~~San Diego~~ ★

~~San Diego Nov. 4, 1962, pp. 1-2~~